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UNCLAS HARARE 001151

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS AND AF/S RAYNOR

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION MASS ACTION IN ZIM; HARARE

11. Editorials in the June 5 editions of the government-controlled daily "Chronicle" and the pro-government "Business Tribune" concentrated on the continuing mass action in Zimbabwe called by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) to pressure the Mugabe administration to the negotiating table as a lead up to arresting the run-away economic meltdown in the country.
Excerpts:
12. Under headline "Saboteurs must face wrath of law" the "Chronicle" (06/05) comments:

"The devil has been unmasked. It is clear who the nation's enemy is. The businesses that closed on Monday confirmed what has always been our suspicion - that they are working in cahoots with the opposition MDC to sabotage the economy. . .The nation cannot continue to be fooled by these saboteurs who claim their action is meant to protect property. . .Those who wine and dine with the enemy are accomplices and should be treated as such. . . ."
13. Under headline "Politicians playing into West's hands" the pro-government weekly "Business Tribune" (06/05) comments:

". . .In the end, both ZANU-PF and the MDC are playing into the hands of the West. On the one hand, ZANU-PF believes it will eventually subdue what they label the West's surrogate (the MDC) by using the state machinery while on the other the MDC looks up to the West's economic and military muscle to effect a regime change. . .They are both bound to fail. Meanwhile the West will be the victor as the destruction of the economy continues until total collapse. . .whoever is going to preside over the ashes will have to appeal for Western assistance and the West will only be too happy to give it - with strings attached. . .The mass action must have been quite embarrassing to both Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo. . .Uppermost in their minds could be how Zimbabwe has continued to display to the world its political immaturity. Zimbabweans should now rise above their bovine intelligence and begin to behave like people who appreciate the extent of the Zimbabwean crisis."

SULLIVAN